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Message Text

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53
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 H-02

NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 AID-05 OMB-01 ABF-01 TRSE-00 SAM-01 /073 W
---------- 101808
P R 021306Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1412
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, LE
SUBJECT: STATUS OF AUB HOSPITAL

1. ELIE SALEM, DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, AUB, AND DONALD MEYER, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AT AUB, CALLED ON CHARGE AUGUST 1 TO DISCUSS KIDNAPPING OF KHALIL SALEM, DIRGEN, MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SEE BEIRUT 6726, PARA TEN) AND STATUS OF AUB HOSPITAL (AUH). THEY WERE VERY CONCERNED OVER KIDNAPPING OF KHALIL SALEM BECAUSE (1) HE IS COUSIN OF AUB DEAN SALEM; (2) HE WAS KEY MAN IN ARRANGING GOL LOAN OF LL19 MILLION TO AUB; AND (3) HIS DISAPPEARANCE HAD VERY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON AUB CHRISTIAN PERSONNEL. ELIE SALEM SAID HE HAD CALLED ON MANY LEADING FIGURES IN BEIRUT, INCLUDING PM RASHID KARAME AND PFLP LEADER GEORGE HABASH (AN OLD SCHOOL FRIEND) SEEKING NEWS OF KHALIL SALEM, SO FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS. HE DID NOT ASK FOR OUR HELP, SAYING SIMPLY THAT HE WANTED TO KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED. (AT 10:00 AM AUGUST 2, RADIO BEIRUT REPORTED THAT KHALIL SALEM HAD BEEN MURDERED.)

2. SALEM AND MEYER SAID AUH WAS CONTINUING TO
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OPERATE ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS. ONLY 280 BEDS (OF 410)

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WERE NOW IN USE BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE OF PERSONNEL, PARTICULARLY NURSES. ONLY 45 PER CENT OF NORMAL STAFF WAS NOW WORKING BECAUSE MANY CHRISTIANS WERE AFRAID TO COME TO WORK; IF, AS RESULT OF RECENT WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS, ALL CHRISTIAN PERSONNED STAYED HOME, STAFF WOULD BE DOWN TO 30 PER CENT OF NORMAL.

3. SALEM AND MEYER WERE CONCERNED THAT WITH DISAPPEARANCE OF KHALIL SALEM, WHO WAS KEY FINANCIAL OFFICIAL IN GOL, AUB WILL ALSO SUFFER FINANCIALLY. IN EXPECTATION OF RECEIVING LL19 MILLION RECONSTRUCTION LOAN FROM GOL (AT 3 PER CENT), AUB HAD RAISED "COMMERCIAL" LOAN OF LL9 MILLION FROM AGRICULTURAL BANK(AT 7 PER CENT), OF WHICH LL8.7 HAD BEEN RECEIVED. AUB INTENTION WAS TO PAY OFF THIS LOAN AS SOON AS GOL LOAN RECEIVED. WITH DEATH OF KHALIL SALEM, PROSPECTS FOR GOL LOAN HAVE DIMMED, AND AUH MAY SOON BE IN EVEN MORE SERIOUS FINANCIAL STRAITS.

4. MEYER HAS ALSO REPORTED THAT AUB PRESIDENT LICHTENWALNER LEFT FOR UK JULY 30 AND MAY ALSO BE VISITING U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA TO RAISE FUNDS. LICHTENWALNER IS EXPECTED BACK IN BEIRUT ABOUT AUGUST 9.
HUNT

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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TAGS: PINS, SHUM, LE, (SALEM, KHALIL)
To: STATE
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